

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003964

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NICOSIA FOR DEA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PREL](#) [XF](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: MIDEAST STATES DISCUSS REGIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING;
STRESS ENHANCED COOPERATION, INFORMATION SHARING

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (U) The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,s Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East met in Amman, Jordan, 23-27 June 2003. The functions of the Subcommission are to coordinate regional activities directed against illicit drug traffic and to formulate recommendations to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. It meets annually for a period of four days and strives to strengthen the bonds of cooperation between member states in combating the drug trafficking and addiction. Embassy Amman Pol Intern attended with two representatives of the DEA from Nicosia, Cyprus.

2. (U) Participants collectively highlighted three areas of interest in the opening sessions of the conference: combating the drug trade through high-level contact and cooperation; breaking the heroin market by assisting Afghanistan in setting up a legal, institutional framework to retard outflow by 2013; and, providing Afghanistan with the political, security, and financial assistance necessary to rid that country of its sizable poppy crop. Members present included Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Egypt, Iran, UAE, Lebanon, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey, India, the United States, Russia, and Germany. The Arab League, United Nations Development Program, Saudi Arabia,s Prince Nayef Academy for Security Sciences, and the World Customs Organization were among the intergovernmental and United Nations bodies in attendance.

3. (SBU) Although speakers in the first sessions spoke at length about the importance of intergovernmental cooperation, it was clear from their remarks that little, in fact, existed. Instead, participants lauded the efforts of individual states in intercepting large quantities of drugs within and at their borders. Given that most experts agree that the Middle East is a critical transit zone between suppliers in Central, South, and South-East Asia and areas of consumption in Europe and North America, participants devoted considerable attention to developing joint investigations, law enforcement training, and information sharing.

4. (SBU) The Subcommission established ad-hoc working groups to review issues of regional importance and to facilitate informal discussions. These sessions provided participants with a forum in which to praise one another (and themselves) for individual state achievements while paradoxically making veiled criticisms of one another for not doing enough to prevent outflow from their borders. In particular, India and Pakistan, and Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates, traded barbs regarding porous borders and the ability of precursors and final products to slip past officials.

5. (SBU) Veiled criticism of Afghanistan dominated most sessions, despite the absence of Afghan representatives at the conference. Afghanistan remains the world,s largest producer of opium, with an estimated 85 thousand hectares of cultivation this year. At the same time, the country today maintains no industries that require the precursor chemicals necessary to produce final products for export, suggesting that the inflow of such products into Afghanistan only furthers the production of opium and opium derivatives. Participants called for bilateral and multilateral approaches to eradicate this year,s poppy crop; involving non-governmental organizations in the process; and, encouraging greater research on drug abuse prevention.

6. (U) The Subcommission called for the dismantling of regional clandestine laboratories, targeting new trafficking routes, and discussing the latest means of smuggling final products and precursors (including container traffic). In spite of pledges of assistance, experts warned that Afghanistan would not have the capability to deter trafficking significantly for years. Instead, the meeting suggested that the regional and international focus for Afghanistan should be on drug storage, cross-contamination, and preserving chain of evidence at Afghan police stations. Participants in plenary and working group sessions agreed on the need to adopt regional control mechanisms; maintain lines

of communication between offices; establish regular meetings for operational heads; create a regional database to track offenders and routes; and, adopt container profiling strategies currently in place in advanced industrialized ports.

17. (SBU) COMMENT: Given the level of generality of the discussions at the conference and the clear reliance of the participant nations on unilateral control and enforcement measures, we doubt that much concrete progress will come from the conference. We defer to DEA Nicosia on the desirability and viability of the specific recommendations from the conference
GNEHM